



March & April 2006

## Children Running Higher Risks Of Health Issues Due to Weight

The number of overweight children in the United States has taken a dramatic rise in recent years.

The National Center for Health Statistics reports more than 14 percent of children and 11 percent of adolescents are overweight. An additional 14 percent are at risk of becoming overweight, said Janice Hermann, Oklahoma State University Cooperative Extension nutrition specialist.

“Being an overweight or obese adult increases the risks of disease conditions including high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and certain types of cancer,” Hermann said. “Because being overweight in childhood increases the risk of being overweight in adulthood, overweight children may be at greater risk of developing these health conditions later in life.”

There are many factors that contribute to being overweight. Some of these factors can be modified while others cannot.

Non-modifiable factors are genetics or family history, age and gender. A person can run a greater risk of getting a disease if there has been a family history of it.

Factors that can be modified include following a diet that contains foods from all food groups, as well as getting enough exercise.

Children need enough food for proper growth, but too many calories coupled with too little physical activity leads to being overweight.

Many schools have cut physical education because of funding. Other children spend sedentary hours watching television or playing

computer and video games. Many children simply do not get any exercise at all.

“Since children need to grow, weight loss is not recommended unless guided by a health care provider,” she said. “However, growth at proper rates and in a healthy manner is vital to good health.”

To help ensure a child leads a healthy lifestyle, start by helping the child develop healthy eating habits. Help the child make sensible food choices. A healthy diet will include lean meat, poultry, fish, beans, nuts, milk, cheese and other dairy products, along with grains, fruits and vegetables.

Hermann said changes in a child’s diet do not need to be dramatic or extremely restrictive. Start by serving low-fat milk rather than whole, low-fat yogurt and cheese and offer one cookie instead of two.

Children can improve their health and have fun at the same time by including moderate amounts of physical activity each day. Parents can set a good example by joining their child in physical activities. Go for a walk after dinner or ride bikes to the park on the weekend. Incorporating exercise into the family’s lifestyle is good not only for the health of the family, but it also provides them with opportunities to spend more time together.

“Encourage your child to be physically active both at home and at school. If the school doesn’t offer a physical education program, suggest your child play active games during recess,” she said. “Helping a child start out living a healthy lifestyle is one of the greatest gifts a parent can give.”

## Controlling Portion Sizes at Home and Eating Out



The amount of calories you eat affects your weight. In addition to selecting a healthful variety of foods, look at the size of the portions you eat. Choosing nutritious food and keeping portion sizes sensible may help you reach and stay at a healthy weight. Try these other ideas to help you control portions at home.

**Take a standard serving out of the package** and eat it off a plate instead of eating straight out of the large box or bag.

**Avoid eating in front of the TV and computer.** Pay attention to what you are eating and fully enjoy the smell and taste of your foods.

**Eat slowly** so your brain can get the message that your stomach is full.

**Take seconds of veggies and salads** instead of higher-fat, higher calories parts of a meal such as meats or desserts.

**When cooking in large batches, freeze food that you will not serve right away.** This way, you won't be tempted to finish eating the whole batch before the food goes bad. And you'll have ready-made food for another day. Freeze in single meal sized containers.

**Try to eat three sensible meals at regular times throughout the day.** Skipping meals may lead you to eating large portions of high calorie and high fat foods at your next meal or snack. Eat breakfast every day.

**Keep snacking to a minimum.** Eating many snacks throughout the day may lead to weight gain.

**When you do eat away from home try these tips to help you control portions:**

**Share your meal,** order a half portion, or order an appetizer as a main meal.

**Take half or more of your meal home.** You can even ask for your half-meal to be boxed up before you begin eating so you will not be tempted to eat more than you need.

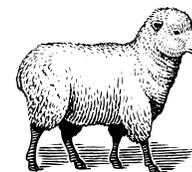
**Stop eating when you begin to feel full.** Focus on enjoying the dining atmosphere with your friends or family for the rest of the meal.

**Avoid large beverages, such as “supersize” soft drinks.** They have a large number of calories. Order the small size, choose a calorie free beverage or drink water with a slice of lemon.

**When traveling, bring along nutritious foods** that will not spoil such as fresh fruit, whole grain crackers, carrot sticks and bottled water. If you stop at a fast food restaurant, choose one that serves salads or order the small burger with lettuce and tomato. Have water or nonfat milk with your meal instead of a soft drink. If you want French fries, order the small size.

### *Shepherd's Pie* A Traditional Irish Dish

In a land where sheep were traditionally a primary food supply, it is not surprising that lamb is the foundation for many traditional Irish farmhouse dishes. You may substitute ground beef for this recipe, if so then the dish is known as “Cottage Pie”.



1 pound minced lamb	1 ½ pounds potato
large onion, chopped	½ c mushrooms, sliced
Bay leaf	2 carrots, diced
½ c flour	1Tbsp tomato puree
1/8 c butter	4 Tbsp milk
1 c lamb or beef stock	½ c cheese

Fry the lamb with chopped onion, bay leaf, sliced mushroom and diced carrots for 8-19 minutes. Add the flour and stir for a minute. Slowly blend in the stock and tomato puree. Cook, stirring, until the mixture thickens and boils. Cover and simmer gently for 25 minutes. Remove the bay leaf and place in an oven proof serving dish.

At the same time, cook the potatoes in boiling water for 20 minutes until tender. Drain well, mash with the butter and milk and mix well. Spread on top of the lamb mixture and sprinkle over with grated cheese.

Bake for 15 - 20 minutes in a preheated oven at 400 degrees.



*When Irish eyes are smiling...  
You know something's cook' in.*

# April is Child Abuse Prevention Month

## Education is Key in Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect

The best strategy in preventing child abuse and neglect in children is education, said Debbie Richardson, Extension Child Development Specialist.

“Sadly, there are approximately 1 million confirmed reports of child abuse and neglect in the United States every year,” says Richardson.

Research indicates that physical and emotional abuse of children yields harmful consequences for the society. More and more evidence links child abuse and neglect with drug and alcohol abuse, teen pregnancy, youth violence and chronic health problems.

“All types of abuse and neglect can rob children of their childhood, their sense of security and well being, as well as their future,” she said. “It’s imperative to get the message out that effective prevention efforts need to address child abuse and neglect *before* it starts. This can be done through comprehensive community-based efforts that support parents and children.”

Supporting the children and parents in your family and extended community has been shown to reduce the likelihood of child abuse and neglect. Be a good neighbor and offer a helping hand by taking care of the children for a couple of hours so the parent(s) can rest or spend time together.

Another step toward prevention of child abuse and neglect is to become involved in your community and work with organizations to help develop services to meet the needs of healthy children and families.

“Remember, child abuse and neglect occurs in all segments of our society. Abuse doesn’t just happen in someone else’s family,” Richardson said. “There are greater risks of abuse and neglect occurring in families where parents abuse alcohol and drugs, are isolated from their families or communities, or have difficulty controlling their anger or stress. Educate yourself to recognize warning signs of child abuse and neglect. Keeping children from harm is the responsibility of every adult in community.

If you have reason to suspect a child has been or may be harmed, call the state child abuse reporting hotline at 1-800-522-3511 or the local police department.

## For Community Members . . .



***Build a support network by getting involved in your community.***

***Get to know your neighbors.***

Develop friendly relationships with your neighbors and their children. Problems often seem less overwhelming when you have support nearby.

***Get involved in your child’s school.***

Join the parent-teacher organization and attend school events.

***Be an active community member.***

Attend town meetings and community events. Join groups that are working to improve your community.

***Know where to get help.***

Many schools and communities offer programs and support for parents and children. Find out what services are available for you and your neighbors. Check your yellow pages under “human services”.

***Taking these steps helps strengthen your family and your community***

*Resource: Prevent Child Abuse America*

### Free Parenting Resources

***School Begins at Birth Series:***

Birth – Twelve months

***Understanding Children Series:***

Birth – Five Yrs. Old

***Help Children Cope Series:***

Stress, Divorce, Moving

***Guiding Young Children Series:*** Discipline



These fact sheets are available at your local county OSU Extension Office or <http://agweb.okstate.edu/pearl/>

# Choctaw County OHCE

## OHCE Recognizes Members

Choctaw County OHCE members were recognized for their accomplishment and dedication during the county's annual OHCE Awards Program held February 20<sup>th</sup>. The award recipients were:

**OHCE Young Member of the Year:**  
Christie Hood, Hugo Club

**OHCE Member of the Year:**  
Maria Langford, Hugo Club

**Rookie of the Year:**  
Tonya West, LOV-n-OHCE Club

**Heart of OHCE Member:**  
Sherri Cheek, LOV-n-OHCE Club



**OHCE YOUNG MEMBER OF THE YEAR** was presented to Christie Hood by Anne Page, OHCE County President.

## OHCE Upcoming Events

Monday, March 20<sup>th</sup>  
12:00 noon

**Gardening Solutions**  
Presenter: Marty Montague, AG  
Extension Educator  
OSU Extension Office



**NOTE:** *The monthly OHCE Lunch-n-Learns will now be held the third Thursday of each month starting in APRIL.*

Thursday, April 20<sup>th</sup>  
10:00 a.m.

## OHCE Executive Board Meeting

12:00 noon  
**Skin Care & Cancer Prevention**  
OSU Extension Office



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## Nutrition & Food Preparation Classes

Held every Monday  
10:00 a.m.  
Choctaw Co. Library, Hugo



Presented by the OSU Cooperative Extension Service and the Community Nutrition Education Program (CNEP).



### Promoting Healthy Kids Community Meeting

Coming Soon to Choctaw County

Cooking Demos & Sampling      Family Resource & Health Fair      Door Prizes